

# Inexperienced Workers

## Goal

This program increases workplace hazard awareness for young and/or inexperienced workers.

## Objective

The young and inexperienced workers will be able to identify and avoid some basic workplace hazards.

## Background

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, survey for year ending 2005 indicates 837 injuries occurred in the 0 to 19 age group and 8,510 injuries occurred to workers in the 19 to 29 age group, all of whom had been on the job less than one year. These statistics come from private industries operating only in Texas. They do not include injuries occurring in governmental or farm facilities.

In Texas young workers under 25 years of age are steadily entering the workforce.

Young and/or inexperienced workers present a major challenge to managers and supervisors to ensure that these workers do not end up on the injury statistic list right from the start.

To help protect the young worker, Federal child labor laws limit work hours for teens and prohibit workers under 18 from certain occupations. (Additional information regarding the child labor laws can be obtained from the Texas Workforce Commission at [www.twc.state.tx.us](http://www.twc.state.tx.us) or by telephone at the Texas Child Labor Office (800) 832-9243)

These include:

- use of dangerous chemicals,
- driving powered industrial trucks (fork lifts, etc.)
- power driven machinery (food mixers, bread slicing and wrapping machines, wood working,)
- punch presses, rolling and bending machines, shearing machines); and all wrecking/demolition and roofing work.

When a young and/or inexperienced worker is recruited it is most important that training begins immediately. These workers should be trained on the specific job function they will perform including how to safely perform the job. New and/or inexperienced workers should be given training on such topics as personal protection, proper lifting, working with or around electricity, and slips, trips, and falls.

## Personal Protection

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) protects a person's body parts from possible harm. Employers are responsible for providing each employee with appropriate, properly fitted PPE. Training must also be provided for any employee required to use PPE. Employees should consult their supervisor if their PPE doesn't fit properly or training has not been provided.

Types of PPE include:

- steel-toed shoes or boots;
- safety helmets (hard hats);
- glasses, goggles, face shields;
- gloves;
- hearing protection; and/or
- respiratory devices.

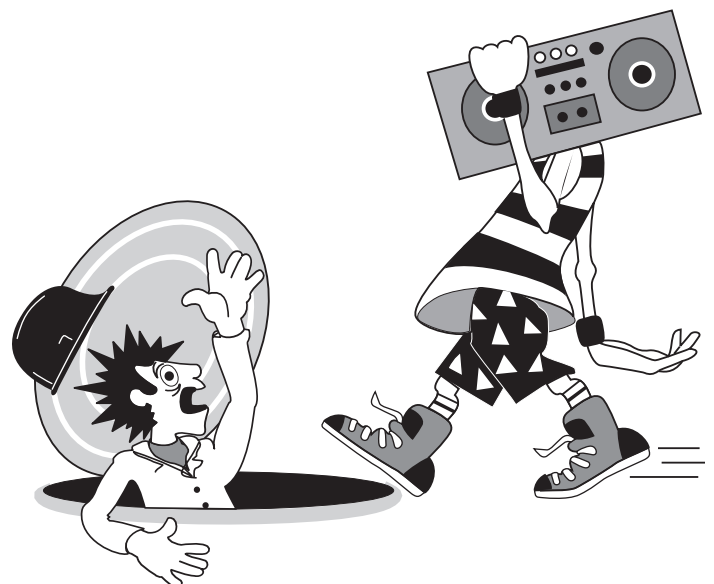
Safety boots and helmets should be worn in warehouses, on construction sites and anywhere there is a potential for crushing or piercing injuries.

Glasses, goggles, or face shields should be worn when performing any task where there is flying debris. Special lenses may be necessary for some tasks.

Hand protection is needed to avoid cuts or punctures when handling abrasive or sharp objects.

Respiratory protection must be provided when the supply of fresh air is inadequate. Teens may not work in any environment that requires more than a paper face mask.

Employees are responsible for wearing appropriate attire



for each task. Entangling injuries may result from accidents involving jewelry and/or loose clothing.

## **Workplace Injuries**

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### **Lifting**

An estimated eight out of every ten people suffer a back injury during their lifetime. Back injuries can occur regardless of age simply by lifting in the wrong manner or improperly carrying a heavy load.

The following 8 steps identify the correct way to lift a load and reduce the chance of straining or spraining the back.

- Size up the load—assess the load before lifting by slowly applying force against the object. Make sure the load is stable and balanced. If the load is too heavy, get help.
- Plan the job - choose the easiest route that is free of tripping and slipping hazards.
- Set up a good base of support - keep feet shoulder-width apart, and one foot slightly behind the other, to provide a stable lifting base.
- Bend at the knees, not at the waist - squat down as far as necessary using your legs, not your back.
- Get a good grip - grasp firmly, using both hands.
- Keep the load close - less force is exerted on your back if you keep the load close to your body with your back upright.
- Keeping your head up and your shoulders back, lift with your legs - using your strong calf and thigh muscles to lift, flexing at the knee and hip joints.
- Pivot, don't twist - when changing directions, turn your entire body, pivoting on your feet.

### **Electricity**

Accidents involving electricity result in thousands of injuries and deaths every year. Faulty equipment causes unsafe working conditions. The following conditions make electrical equipment dangerous:

- defective insulation or parts;
- improper grounding;
- vibrating machinery;
- loose connections; and/or
- unguarded energized parts.

Take the following precautions when working around electrical appliances:

- check the equipment, cords, and attachments before each use;
- use equipment in good working condition;
- report any defective equipment or parts;
- do not use electrical equipment when your hands are wet or any part of you is touching water;

- make sure all equipment and outlets are properly grounded;
- do not modify or remove guards from equipment;
- switch off power before plugging in equipment; and
- turn the equipment off after use.

### **Slips, Trips, and Falls**

Every worker is responsible for keeping his/her workplace safe from tripping and slipping hazards. It is simply a matter of good housekeeping. Some causes of trips and slips in the work area to watch for are as follows:

- objects left in walkways;
- falls from elevated position; and
- foreign substances on the floor like water, food, grease, oil, soap, and other debris.

Take the following precautions to avoid slips and falls:

- clean footwear thoroughly before entering the building;
- use handrails provided with stairs and ramps;
- practice ladder safety;
- properly assemble and secure scaffolds;
- use toe boards to prevent tools from falling off scaffolding;
- tape down or remove extension cords in walkways;
- wear appropriate footwear for the jobsite; and
- report any equipment or supplies left in walkways.

## **Conclusion**

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Management and the new and/or inexperienced worker is a partnering in the workplace. Management has the right to expect the young and/or inexperienced worker to be efficient and productive. Likewise, the company has the responsibility to ensure these employees are receiving proper training and have supervisors that understand the transition between young/inexperienced and experienced workers.

## **Review**

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1. According to the federal child labor laws, what occupations are prohibited to employees under age 18?
  - a. use of dangerous chemicals, power driven machinery, all wrecking/demolition and roofing work
  - b. use of dangerous chemicals, use of computer equipment, all wrecking/demolition and roofing work
  - c. all wrecking/demolition and roofing work, use of dangerous chemicals, power driven machinery, and retail clerking
  - d. all of the above

2. List three types of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).
  - a. safety helmets, safety glasses, respiratory devices
  - b. hearing protection, steel toed boots, hard hats
  - c. gloves, safety goggles, face shields
  - d. all the above
3. What precautions must be taken when working around electrical appliances?
  - a. check equipment, cords, and attachments before use
  - b. do not modify or remove guards
  - c. ignore any defective equipment or parts
  - d. a & b
4. What are 2 slip and/or trip hazards in the workplace?
  - a. objects left in walkways and falls from elevated positions
  - b. substances left on floor such as water, food, grease and falls from above
  - c. falls from elevated positions and substances left on floor such as oil, and soap
  - d. all of the above
5. Who is responsible for keeping the workplace safe from tripping and slipping hazards?
  - a. supervisors
  - b. managers
  - c. workers
  - d. all of the above

## Answers

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1. a
2. d
3. a & b
4. d
5. d

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## Resources

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI/DWC) Resource Center offers a workers' health and safety video tape library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit our web site at [www.tdi.state.tx.us](http://www.tdi.state.tx.us).

Disclaimer: Information contained in this training program is considered accurate at time of publication.